

All three narrate the emancipation of the Bible from ecclesial authority. L. judges this decoupling an unmitigated disaster, whereas Sheehan seems to omit his own judgment. Readers allergic to polemics will probably wince at the beginning and end of *The Death of Scripture*, where L.'s rhetoric is loudest—consider the final paragraph, where he writes, “I believe that the scriptural Bible and the academic Bible are fundamentally different creations oriented toward rival interpretive communities. . . . Academic criticism tempers belief, while scriptural reading edifies and directs it. In this sense, they work at cross-purposes” (169).

Those more invested in the project of modern biblical criticism might have more bones to pick with L. In my judgment he oversells the importance of the 16th-century split in the Western church as a causal agent in devolution of Scripture into text. The Middle Ages, as any history of religious orders shows, knew deep and painful divisions rooted in foundational approaches that led to divergent approaches to Scripture. The 16th century did not invent but rather inherited these patterns of rhetoric and theological diversity. The theological failure, however, became entangled with a political failure that could not avoid engaging in warfare despite its exponential rise in economic cost and loss of life. Additionally, L. omits almost all social history. One wonders whether there were Jews in Göttingen and whether Michaelis's anti-Judaism resulted from bad theology or from social structures that contributed to growing antagonism. Finally, the book might have benefited from a chapter that examined the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Michaelis's work in the same thorough fashion with which L. examines other episodes relating to his thesis. Such an examination would counter objections that such better-known figures as Spinoza or Richard Simon or Kant should be blamed for the decline. In the meantime, though, theologians should thank L. for initiating what one hopes will be a long and fruitful, if not irenic, conversation.

*Saint Louis University*

GRANT KAPLAN

WORSHIP IN THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS. By John Paul Heil. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011. Pp. viii + 318. \$36.

Heil expounds Hebrews as embodying the most complete theology of worship in the New Testament. This homily or “word of encouragement” (Heb 13:22), he argues, was presented orally in a public performance for an audience gathered as a worshipping community. If worship was the major concern in Hebrews, it also involved “ethical,” “moral” worship that shaped the conduct of the faithful not only inside the liturgical assembly but also “outside,” in their daily lives.

Aware that his audience could be almost imperceptibly “slipping away” (2:1) like a ship coming loose from its moorings, “neglecting” the “great

salvation” offered to them (2:3), or even “hardening their hearts” (3:13, 15), the anonymous author of Hebrews proclaims the “living word” of God (4:12). “The audience [can] hear the scriptural voice of God”(24), a word that “not only offers life but [also], as a performative speech act heard during worship, produces” and brings alive a reality for those who “respond obediently to the word’s invitation to enter into God’s own rest” (71).

From the outset H. exegetes Hebrews as inviting its audience to glorify God and approach the divine presence so as to worship God through the royal Son, who is himself “a most worthy and appropriate object of worship not only by the angels of God” but also by the assembled faithful (28). As they hear the letter being read to them, the audience should open their hearts (3:7) and do so in the liturgical “today” (1:5; 4:7), a moment for listening during the communal worship to the voice of God urging them not to harden their hearts. Thus they can participate in the heavenly worship of God’s Son, who has entered eternally into heaven. In doing this, they avail themselves of the assistance of God’s angels, who are spirits ministering in the heavenly worship (1:6–7, 14). In worshipping on earth, the faithful should look forward to entering the future “rest” (3:11), in the sanctuary above where they will share forever in the heavenly worship.

H. finds Hebrews to be constructed of “three distinct but interconnected macrochiastic levels,” with 33 distinct units exhibiting their own “microchiastic structure” (7–8). In his 2010 book, *Hebrews: Chiastic Structure and Audience Response*, H. had already shown his “chiastic hand.” He now examines the letter “through the lens of worship,” relentlessly pursuing chiasms and constantly paraphrasing the text. Aficionados of chiasms will be delighted; others may be dismayed. The result is that the cultic worship of Christians dominates in this work, and any high-priestly Christology, while certainly not ignored, is rendered subordinate. With the main text forming a book-long paraphrase of Hebrews as worship, readers may find their eyes regularly descending to the foot of the page. There, well-chosen footnotes contain pertinent observations from H. himself and insightful comments gleaned from other authors. The book ends by drawing out implications from Hebrews for the practice and spirituality of Christian worship today.

H., while showing great familiarity with scholarly work on Hebrews, neglects John Scholer and his 1991 study, *Proleptic Priests: Priesthood in the Letter to the Hebrews*. What Scholer developed about “approaching” God continually and cultically through the mediatorship of Jesus might have been appropriated in favor of H.’s argument. The work of veteran scholar Albert Vanhoye is also missing. But in this case Vanhoye’s exposition of the structure of Hebrews could not be reconciled with H.’s totally chiastic analysis.